

REMARKS

In the Official Action mailed on **28 December 2007**, the Examiner reviewed claims 1-3, 5-7, and 34-44. Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5-7, 34-36, and 39-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based on Matson et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,695,112, hereinafter "Matson"). Examiner rejected claims 37-38 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matson.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Independent claims 1, 34, 43, and 44 were rejected as being anticipated by Matson. Applicant respectfully disagrees for at least the reason that Matson does not disclose a separation mechanism (e.g., key or tab) which is a part of the substrate and which is configured to be broken off from the substrate.

Applicant respectfully points out that Matson discloses a **locking mechanism which prevents the forceful removal of terminals from a connector housing** (see Matson column 1, lines 25-32; column 1, lines 44-46; column 3, lines 39-41; column 3, line 67 to column 4, line 2; and column 4, lines 19-24). Thus, the separation/removal mechanism disclosed by Matson necessarily requires **two pieces**: a terminal which is part of the circuit board substrate (see Matson FIG. 1, element 16) and a connector housing which is not part of the circuit board substrate (see Matson FIG. 1, element 14).

Furthermore, Matson discloses a resilient locking arm 48 which can flex to the bottom of the channel when plug 16 is inserted into connector 14; locking arm 48 then flexes towards the top surface so that lobe 50 enters into lock hole 22 (see Matson FIG. 2; and column 2, line 64 to column 3, line 7). Since locking arm 48 is flexible, this operation can be performed in reverse by lowering lobe 50 and pulling plug 16 out of connector 14. Hence, the terminals can be removed from

the connector housing **without breaking or destroying** the connector housing or the terminals (which are a part of the circuit board substrate).

In contrast, embodiments of the present invention provide a mechanism which proves that an assembly has been disabled (see page 3, lines 11-14 of the instant application). The mechanism is part of a circuit board which includes a **substrate that includes a specified area of the substrate that is used as a mechanism for provably disabling the circuit board** (see instant application FIG. 1, key 104; FIG. 2, key 204; FIG. 3, key 304; and FIG. 4, key 404; and page 3, line 25 to page 6, line 24). In other words, the mechanism is an integral part of the substrate and is not a separate component which can be coupled to the substrate. Furthermore, the mechanism is configured to be detached by **breaking the substrate in the specified area** (see instant application page 4, lines 8-11; page 5, lines 1-9; page 6, lines 12-16; and FIGs. 1-4). In other words, separating the mechanism from the circuit board is a destructive process.

Hence, unlike the device disclosed by Matson, in these embodiments of the present invention, the circuit board includes a substrate that includes a specified area of the substrate that is used as a mechanism for provably disabling the circuit board, wherein the mechanism is configured to be detached by breaking the substrate in the specified area. This is beneficial because an entity charged with disposal of the assembly can detach the mechanism to disable the mechanism and to prove that the assembly has been disabled (e.g., show the removed mechanism).

There is nothing in Matson which suggest a circuit board which includes a substrate that includes a specified area of the substrate that is used as a mechanism for provably disabling the circuit board, wherein the mechanism is configured to be detached by breaking the substrate in the specified area. Thus, Matson does not anticipate the claimed invention.

Accordingly, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 34, 43, and 44 to clarify that some embodiments of the present invention are directed to a circuit board which includes *a substrate that includes a specified area of the substrate that is used as a mechanism for provably disabling the circuit board, wherein the mechanism is configured to be detached by breaking the substrate in the specified area*. These amendments find support on page 3, line 25 - page 6, line 24 and FIGs. 1-4 of the instant application.

Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 34, 43, and 44 as presently amended are in condition for allowance. Applicant also submits that claims 2-3 and 5-7, which depend upon claim 1, and claims 35-42, which depend upon claim 34, are for the same reasons in condition for allowance and for reasons of the unique combinations recited in such claims.

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the application is presently in form for allowance.
Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 25 March 2008

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